

BACKGROUND

DEFINITION

The Old Spanish Trail was primarily a horse and burro pack route between Santa Fe and Los Angeles, which developed partly from a network of American Indian routes, and was used by explorers, trappers, traders, prospectors, and immigrants. In 1847, Mormons initiated wagon travel along the western half of the trail while traveling between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. The Mormon wagon route replicated or paralleled the Old Spanish Trail for most of the distance between the present-day communities of Paragonah, Utah, and San Bernardino, California. Journals kept by Mormon travelers provide excellent information on the Old Spanish Trail. These route descriptions are included as part of the Old Spanish Trail Complex in this document. However, the study recommends (see “Period of Significance: Trade and Commerce” section) that the Mormon Road be considered either a separate historic route or a component of another trail, such as the California Trail.

Detailed maps of the trail are found in Appendix C.

Two main routes emerged—the Armijo (Southern) Route and the Northern Route. The North Branch (East and West Forks) of the Old Spanish Trail through the San Luis Valley and Gunnison River country of Colorado and eastern Utah was a variant of the Northern Route.

It is commonly said that the Old Spanish Trail was neither “old” nor “Spanish.” The first documented use of the name came from John C. Frémont in the 1840s, and the name was picked up and used by others, principally Anglo-American travelers. Nineteenth-century Mexican traders in New Mexico referred to it as the “*camino de California*,” and *Californios* referred to it as the “*camino de Santa Fe*” or the “*camino de Nuevo Mexico*.” Sometimes, Anglo-Americans used those designations, but not often. The name “Old Spanish Trail” has come into common use and is now considered the appropriate name for the trail.

DOCUMENTATION

The identification of the Northern and Armijo (Southern) routes of the Old Spanish Trail and their several variants was based largely on travel diaries and military expedition records. The most specific of these accounts are Domínguez-Escalante (1776); Armijo (1829); Orville Pratt (1848); Gunnison (1853); Addison Pratt (1849); Cheesman (1850); Huntington (1855); Macomb (1859); and Parley P. Pratt (1851).

More recently, historians and archeologists have studied the various routes followed by trappers, traders, immigrants, and military expeditions (for example, see Hafen and Hafen (1982), Crampton and Madsen (1994), Sánchez (1997), Warren (1974), and Walker (1986)).

In addition to published sources, the Spanish Colonial Research Center did an inventory of guides, catalogues, card catalogues, indexes, files, computerized indexes, and data bases in Mexico City. The primary research effort concentrated on the Archivo Histórico Diplomático, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, and the Archivo General de la Nación. The work in these sources involved going through collections and sections that comprise several thousand volumes of bound documents and loosely collected manuscripts. This work concentrated on the period from 1821-1848. A number of documents were selected from these archives, and a detailed examination of their contents continues to the present.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

American Indian groups have lived for thousands of years throughout what is now the American Southwest. These groups developed an extensive network of routes for travel and trade. As with other western trails, it is likely that segments of the Old Spanish Trail follow some earlier trails and trade routes. Trade and travel along the route, or portions of it, included use by Ute, Paiute, Comanche, and Navajo peoples.

In 1769, Spain established settlements in southern California to prevent ongoing Russian and English encroachments. Supplying these settlements by sea was difficult because of unfavorable winds and ocean currents. The first land route to southern California was extended from La Paz in Baja, California, to San Diego in 1769. In 1775 and 1776, Juan Bautista de Anza led settlers north into California from Sonora, Mexico.

Spain also was interested in establishing a viable overland link between her northern holdings in California and New Mexico. Parts of what would become the Old Spanish Trail were explored from the west when Father Francisco Hermengildo Garcés set out from the Yuma villages along the Gila River in southern Arizona to explore a path to the California missions beginning in 1774. To get there, Garcés traveled north to the friendly Mojave villages along the Colorado River. There, he was offered four guides, who led him along indigenous trails to the Mojave River. Garcés followed the Mojave for several days, reaching Misión San Gabriel via the San Bernardino-San Gabriel Ranges. Garcés traveled along a network of indigenous trails through the Mojave Desert; some of them later became part of the western portion of the Old Spanish Trail.

Spanish colonial interest in trade with the Utes began in the seventeenth century. Fearing renewed hostilities caused by unfair trade practices, eighteenth-century Spanish officials prohibited trade with the Utes. Flaunting the law, traders from New Mexico followed pathways to the land of the Utes. Each illegal expedition invariably furnished knowledge of Ute country. As Spanish frontiersmen ventured beyond western Colorado, they learned different ways to get to the Great Basin. Later, the more experienced served as guides on official expeditions to western Colorado and Utah.

Three officially sanctioned expeditions from New Mexico into Ute country, composed partially of men who had previously traded illegally with the Utes, reflected renewed Spanish interest in Ute country. In 1765, Juan María Antonio Rivera led two parties to explore southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah. Eleven years later, in 1776, a third official expedition left Santa Fe following Rivera's route to the Uncompahgre Plateau and beyond to the Great Basin in western Utah. This expedition, led by two Franciscan priests, Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Francisco Silvestre Vélez de Escalante, was intended to establish a route between Santa Fe and Monterey in California. Although their expedition failed in its objective to reach the Pacific coast, they succeeded in providing more information about the interior land and its people.

In the mid-1820s, Hispanic New Mexicans and Anglo-Americans expanded their trade in Ute country. Anglo-American fur trappers, in particular, were interested in meeting European demand for beaver hats with new sources of fur in the Rocky Mountains. While trapping for beaver, these men explored the region. In 1825-1826 Antoine Robidoux built Fort Uncompahgre (Fort Robidoux) near present-day Delta, Colorado. This fort was a centralized trading area where various Indian groups brought furs to trade; these furs were then transported to Santa Fe or Bent's Old Fort over routes that later became part of the Old Spanish Trail. Robidoux later built another fur-trade post, Fort Uintah, in northeastern Utah. The North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail was used to supply these trading posts.

Beginning in the 1820s, several groups of fur trappers made their way from New Mexico to California via various routes through Arizona. Collectively, these routes are sometimes called the Gila Route because most travelers trapped along the Gila River en route. In 1827, Richard Campbell led 35 men to San Diego. While it is sometimes assumed that he went south along the Gila, he later remembered taking a more northerly route using the Crossing of the Fathers and then going north of the Grand Canyon. In 1827, Sylvester Pattie led a group along the Gila to *Baja California*, where they were imprisoned by Mexican officials and taken to San Diego. Two members of this party, Isaac Slover and William Pope, escaped and returned to New Mexico. They later followed the Old Spanish Trail to live in California. Ewing Young led a group which included Kit Carson—via Zuni and the Salt River and then trapped along the Virgin River in Utah before heading to California in 1830. Some members of these groups, as well as members of other groups traveling via southern routes, stayed in California.

In 1829, Mexican trader Antonio Armijo departed from Abiquiú in command of a commercial caravan of 60 men. Armijo successfully established a route to Los Angeles, where he traded serapes and other New Mexican goods for horses and mules. Following known American Indian and Spanish paths, Armijo traveled west through Navajo and Paiute territory, and forded the Colorado River at the Crossing of the Fathers—an indigenous crossing used by Domínguez and Escalante in 1776. Thence, Armijo generally followed the present state boundary between Arizona and Utah until he reached the Virgin River. From the Virgin River, based on the advice from his guide, he passed south of present-day Las Vegas on his way to the Amargosa River.

William Wolfskill and George C. Yount first established the Northern Route of the Old Spanish Trail as they passed through central Utah in 1831. With a party of approximately 20 men, Wolfskill and Yount departed Abiquiú in the winter of 1830, and went to California by a route that Wolfskill would later describe as being “farther north than that adopted by the Spaniards in traveling between California and New Mexico.” The Wolfskill-Yount route headed northwest to a crossing of the Colorado River, then west and southwest through Utah. They returned to the Colorado River and followed it to the Mojave villages, where they rested and fed their animals and traded with the Mojave. The party then proceeded west to Los Angeles.

A major variation of the Old Spanish Trail was established by travelers using American Indian and Spanish colonial routes from Santa Fe and Taos into the San Luis Valley of Colorado, and then west to Cochetopa Pass and the Gunnison River Valley. It provided a corridor into eastern Utah. The route through the San Luis Valley split into an East Fork and a West Fork. These trails collectively formed a route that became known as the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail.

As use of the Old Spanish Trail continued, travelers established numerous other variations to take advantage of better water sources and to shorten the length and time of travel. By 1848, travelers had developed several variations of the route to the Sevier River in order to avoid the Sawtooth Narrows of Salina Canyon. Another variation, the Kingston Cutoff, led travelers southwest from Mountain Springs, Nevada, to Silurian Lake, California.

As the trail network evolved, partly from indigenous footpaths and partly from newly blazed routes, into a horse and mule trail, and later into a wagon road, several variants were opened through Cajon Pass, north of San Bernardino. Some traffic went over Cajon Pass following what is now California State Highway 152 up to the summit, and descended into the San Bernardino Valley through the area now occupied by the California State University campus. However, the route chosen probably depended on several factors, including party composition, the amount and type of load carried, whether weather was wet or dry, the time of year, and the presence of government inspectors.

A major reason for travel on the Old Spanish Trail was trade between New Mexico and California, primarily by New Mexican trade caravans, which traveled between Santa Fe and Los Angeles between 1829 and 1848. Caravans usually left on the three-month journey in the fall, primarily carrying woolen goods produced in New Mexico. They returned the following year, having traded their goods for horses and mules.

The size of caravans seems to vary from year to year. Some of the documented trading parties include: Antonio Santiesteban and 30 men in 1831; José Avieta and 124 men in 1833-1834; José Antonio Salazar and 75 men in 1839-1840; Francisco Estevan Vigil and 35 men and others (possibly about 134 people) in 1841; Tomás Salazar and 170 men in 1843; and Francisco Estevan Vigil and 209-225 men in 1847. Little or no information seems to be available as to the size of the caravans in 1838, 1840, and 1845. There are no annual trade caravans identified for 1834-1835, 1835-1836, or 1846. There were other travelers, such as Santiago Martín, who went to California with 15 men in 1832 for personal reasons rather than trade.

Overall, the available information on the size of caravans, and to a greater extent the quantity of merchandise carried to California, tends to be vague. The 1841 Vigil group was reported by a Frenchman, Duflot du Mofras, as consisting of 200 New Mexicans and 60 or more North Americans. Duflot suggested that the annual caravans routinely consisted of 200 men, and they returned to New Mexico with about 2,000 horses. However, the known information as to caravan size (see preceding paragraph) suggests that the size of the caravans and the numbers of livestock (see below) brought back varied from year to year. In some years, the documented number of livestock was more than twice du Mofras' estimate and in others only a fraction of that amount.

There was considerable legal trade in horses and mules between California and New Mexico. However, data can only be found for some of the years in which trade caravans operated. The numbers vary from year to year. Some of the known groups include Armijo, with 100 animals in 1830; José Antonio Salazar, with an estimated 2,500 animals in 1839; Francisco Estevan Vigil, with 4,141 animals in 1842; John Rowland, with 300 animals in 1842; a group, with 252 animals in 1843; a Frenchman called Le Tard with 231 animals in 1848; and Francisco Estevan Vigil, again, with 4,628 animals in 1848.

Horse and mule theft was common, both by regular traders and adventurers. Americans claiming to be beaver trappers, fugitive Indians from the missions, Indians from the frontiers, and New Mexicans were teaming together to gather horses and mules for the drive to New Mexico. This illegal trade was of great concern in California and resulted in laws to restrict access by New Mexican traders.

In addition to general reports of livestock theft, there are numbers reported for some incidents. The following are some reports of animals stolen and taken to New Mexico: In 1833, Jesus Uzeta and others stole 430; in 1837, Jean Baptiste Chalifoux and his men stole 1,400-1,500 mules and horses; in 1842, Rowland took 300 stolen animals; In 1844, Jim Beckwourth, according to his claim, took 1,800 horses from California to Bent's Old Fort in 1844; and in 1846, Joseph Walker took 400-500 horses and mules from California, presumably following the Old Spanish Trail into Utah and then north to Fort Bridger and across part of the California Trail and south to Bent's Fort. In 1848, Miles Goodyear left California with 231 legally obtained animals, but reportedly drove an estimated 4,000 animals to Utah and east to Missouri, where he found declining prices due to increased supply and a decrease in emigration. He returned with the horses to California via the Humboldt River route, where he sold them at a handsome profit due to increased demand as a result of the Gold Rush of 1849.

Mountain men such as Beckwourth, Pegleg Smith, and others, and New Mexican traders encouraged Yokuts and other Indians of the California interior to steal horses from the ranchos for resale in New Mexico. The Yokuts, who had already begun stealing horses for food, now stole them for trade. In

California the wide-ranging Utes, the Yokuts of the Central Valley, and other Indians struck the ranchos.

Some of the vast fur trade in the West used the Old Spanish Trail. American travelers along the Old Spanish Trail, Gila (Arizona) routes, and other land routes to California were involved in the fur trade. Many travelers were trapping for furs as they went. William Wolfskill and others who stayed in California gave up beaver trapping to hunt sea otters, at least for a while, before becoming landowners. Furs could also be traded for horses and mules. Antoine Robidoux built two fur trade forts, Fort Uinta and Fort Uncompaghe, and used the North Branch as a route to supply the forts. The fur trade activity along the Old Spanish Trail was part of a massive whole extending across the western half of the continent.

Sheep and wool trade was a major economic industry in New Mexico. New Mexico weavers provided the woolen goods that were carried over the Old Spanish Trail to California. Wool was also shipped east on the Santa Fe Trail. Many thousands of sheep were traded south along the Camino Real to Chihuahua and Durango during the peak years of 1821-1846. The trade languished during the Mexican-American War, but with the discovery of gold in California and its accompanying population boom, a new market was opened. In 1849, a gold-seeker named Roberts bought 500 sheep in New Mexico for \$250, and took them to California through southern Arizona, where he sold them for \$8,000. By 1850, rumors of the new market were common in Santa Fe. William Angney bought 6,000 sheep in 1850 and took them to California via the Old Spanish Trail. In 1852, Richens Lacy "Uncle Dick" Wootton took 9,000 sheep along the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail, on to Salt Lake City, and then west to Sacramento along a California Trail route.

Old Spanish Trail traders also became involved in the ongoing trade in American Indian slaves. Stronger tribes would raid weaker tribes and take captives for sale to the Spanish, and later Mexicans. The Southern Paiutes were the principal victims of the slave trade, which, early in the nineteenth century, is presumed to have used the eastern segments of the later Old Spanish Trail in New Mexico and Utah. Southern Paiutes may have been slaves in Santa Fe and surrounding communities as early as the late 1700s, and the practice continued as late as the 1860s in some parts of Colorado and Utah.

This trade was illegal; and thus, written accounts were seldom kept and official records are largely lacking. There is limited documentation of the extent of the involvement of Old Spanish Trail trade caravans with the slave trade. The main market for slaves was New Mexico, and a number of travelers into the Utah country reported on Mexicans engaged in slave trading. Some Indian slaves were taken to California to be sold.

Hispanic New Mexican families, Anglo-Americans from the U.S., and others immigrated to California on the Old Spanish Trail.

Some New Mexicans accompanied American immigrants, such as the Rowland-Workman party. Others accompanied Mexican trade caravans; and some traveled on their own. Historical references may sometimes only refer to the number of families and not to the number of individuals.

In 1837, José María Chávez and his brother Julian Chávez, with family members and several others, escaped New Mexico by way of Utah to California. They had been singled out for execution for siding with Governor Albino Pérez, who was slain in the New Mexico Rebellion of 1837. In California, they joined the rebel side of a rebellion and were captured by government forces under General José Castro. They were later released. José María returned to New Mexico but Julian remained, settling in Chavez Ravine in Los Angeles. In 1838, Lorenzo Trujillo and six other New Mexicans left New Mexico for California. En route, Manuelita Renaga gave birth at Resting Springs on the Old Spanish Trail. These

eight individuals became the first settlers in the San Bernardino area. In 1839, 75 New Mexicans arrived in California and settled near Rancho de San José. Several groups arrived in 1842, including a party of 40 from Abiquiú, New Mexico, who settled at Agua Mansa and Politana, and a group of 19 families who eventually settled in San Luis Obispo. In 1843, 10 families accompanied the regular caravan; another 10 families possibly accompanied a group under John Rowland; and five families arrived at Agua Mansa in 1844.

Beginning with the Wolfskill-Yount party in 1830, a number of Americans following the Old Spanish Trail also stayed in California. Approximately 28 Americans (about 21 adult males and eight family members) are known to have immigrated along the Old Spanish Trail between 1830 and 1838. William Pope and Isaac Slover, who led a group in 1837, had previously been to California via the Gila Route. In 1841, the Rowland-Workman party immigrated on the trail. Most of the 26 men in this group were Americans, while several were native New Mexicans. Two of the New Mexicans brought their families. Nine members of the Rowland party did not stay in California. In 1844 Louis Robidoux and Jean Jeantet immigrated to California after traveling with a Mexican trade caravan, possibly along the Old Spanish Trail.

Americans and other foreigners who immigrated to California engaged in a variety of businesses. Although 1828 regulations opened California to settlement by foreigners, there was little land available, and Mexican officials were not supportive of grants to foreigners. With the secularization of the missions in 1834, lands that had been previously closed to settlement became available. In the 1840s, Mexican officials opened large amounts of land to private development, and foreigners were permitted to purchase land in California. Many became owners of large holdings. About one-third of the land in California went to Anglo-Americans. The secularization of the missions also meant that thousands of Indians from those missions were now available as a source of cheap labor. And an outside market existed for products of California ranches, primarily hides and tallow. These factors set off a land rush among Mexicans and foreigners.

Additionally, people were drawn to California as a result of numerous boosters who had written about the area, beginning as early as 1808 with the journal of a sea-otter trader, Captain William Shaler; Hall Jackson Kelley's 1839 report to Congress; Richard H. Dana's "Two Years before the Mast"; and others. Tales heard from fur trappers and the published words of hide and tallow traders and travelers who wrote of California helped fuel the American appetite for expansion. Others, such as John Marsh and John Sutter, were also active in luring overland travelers to California.

Some of those who immigrated to California on the Old Spanish Trail became involved in the American underground that worked to hasten the takeover of California. This takeover was generally a goal of the various boosters. John Rowland and William Workman had been involved in the Republic of Texas' failed 1841 invasion of New Mexico. They became active in annexationist intrigues, joining with many, such as Abel Stearns, who were already in California. Both, along with other members of their immigrant party, were involved in the military uprising in 1845 against Governor Micheltorena, as well as later uprisings.

Soon after settling in the Salt Lake area, the Mormons under Brigham Young began expanding southward with the intent of establishing an outlet to the sea. A series of settlements were established in the late 1840s and early 1850s along the "Mormon Corridor," including Parowan and Cedar City, which were near beds of iron and coal. In 1852, Young sent a company of 300 settlers, who followed the western part of the Old Spanish Trail to southern California, where they established a city called San Bernardino. In 1855, the Mormons built a fort at the site of present-day Las Vegas, Nevada, and another group followed part of the Old Spanish Trail to settle Moab, Utah. In 1857, fearing an invasion of Utah

by the U.S. Army, the colonists from San Bernardino and other outposts left their settlements and returned to help defend against the potential invaders.

Over the years, a number of military groups and expeditions followed portions or all of the Old Spanish Trail.

At the forefront of exploration of the West was the U.S. Army Corps of Topographic Engineers—and the most famous member of that group was John C. Frémont. Like most of his colleagues, Frémont was a firm believer in manifest destiny. Already renowned for his earlier explorations, Frémont led a wide-ranging expedition across the West in 1843-1844. His primary objective was to travel from Missouri to Oregon. When he reached Fort Vancouver, his official duty was done, but he chose to head south into California, exploring along the way. In southern California the expedition picked up the Old Spanish Trail. It left the trail in southwest Utah, continued north to Utah Lake, went east along the Uinta Mountains and into Colorado, south to Pueblo, and then east back to St. Louis. In his writings, Frémont referred to the trail as the “Spanish Trail,” a designation that was picked up by others, thus leading to the popular name for the trail. Frémont published maps and detailed descriptions of the Amargosa River Variant of the Old Spanish Trail.

Kit Carson carried military dispatches on several trips, some of them along the Old Spanish Trail. In late 1847, he carried dispatches west along the Old Spanish Trail. In 1848, Carson again traveled with dispatches east from Los Angeles along the Old Spanish Trail to Santa Fe and on to Washington, D.C. George Brewerton, who accompanied Carson, kept an account of the trip, which contains some of the most detailed stories of travel along the trail.

With the American takeover of California, there was a strong interest in completing a railroad connection to the Pacific, and competition between proponents of different routes to make that connection. A number of expeditions followed various northern, southern, and central routes. In 1853, Congress authorized a government survey of all the principal routes under the direction of Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, who was to submit his report in January 1854.

Lieutenant Edward Fitzgerald Beale led a group along the North Branch and then down the main Old Spanish Trail to California in 1853. Beale had been appointed as Indian Commissioner to California. Senator Thomas Hart Benton secured Beale’s appointment and the funding for his trip. Gwinn Harris Heap, Beale’s cousin and a newspaperman, wrote a widely distributed account of the trip, which was very favorable to the route through Cochetopa Pass.

In 1853, Captain John Williams Gunnison led an expedition to explore a possible 38th parallel railroad route across Cochetopa Pass. After entering the San Luis Valley in Colorado, the group followed the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail into western Colorado. In Utah, the group followed parts of the Old Spanish Trail. On October 26, after leaving the Old Spanish Trail, a group from the expedition was attacked, reportedly by Paiute Indians; Gunnison and others were killed, leaving only four survivors. The main party reached the scene two days later, and First Lieutenant Edward G. Beckwith led them to Salt Lake City.

Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, who was a strong proponent of the 38th parallel route for the railroad, secured private funding and sent a survey party led by John C. Frémont behind Gunnison. They followed Gunnison’s tracks on the North Branch and continued into Utah, following parts of the Old Spanish Trail. Entering the Rocky Mountains in December 1853, the group encountered difficulties, forcing them to first walk while the animals carried their supplies, and then to cache all but their most important baggage in order to ride. Eventually, as the animals gave out, they were eaten and their riders had to walk. The travelers suffered severe hardships and one man died. Solomon Carvalho, who wrote

the account of the trip, lost 44 pounds. The party finally reached Parowan, Utah. Frémont had also led a previous expedition in 1848 for Benton exploring a 38th parallel route for the railroad in Colorado, which was not on the Old Spanish Trail, and which ended in the deaths of many of the party when the group encountered severe weather and heavy snow.

From November 1857 to January 1858, Captain Randolph B. Marcy's party of 40 soldiers and 25 mountain men traveled a portion of the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail en route from Fort Bridger to New Mexico to procure supplies for Army troops under General Albert Sidney Johnson, who was poised to suppress a possible insurrection in Salt Lake City. Marcy's group suffered from severe winter weather and lack of food. After reaching Fort Union, they obtained supplies and returned via a longer, safer route.

In the summer of 1858, Colonel William W. Loring and 300 men with 50 wagons used part of the Old Spanish Trail and the North Branch to return from Camp Floyd in Utah to Fort Union.

Captain John N. Macomb led an exploration into southeastern Utah in 1859. The expedition was looking for a military road and seeking the confluence of the Green and Grand Rivers. They followed a section of the Old Spanish Trail and then deviated from that route, rejoining it farther along. The expedition entered Utah near present-day Monticello and set up a base camp. They returned to Santa Fe across the San Juan Basin. A major accomplishment of the expedition was the scientific observations of geologist John S. Newberry.

In 1860, several civilians were killed, and the Paiute Indians were blamed for the deaths, although the identity of the killers and their tribes was actually unknown. Brevet Major James H. Carleton was put in command of a military unit sent forth to punish the Paiute. The troops reached the Mojave River on April 19, and scouted for Indians in the area and along parts of the Old Spanish Trail until July 3. Two groups of Indians were found and five individuals were killed. The troops found evidence of the Timbisha Shoshone tribe but did not encounter them.

Overall, use of much of the Old Spanish Trail, especially the eastern half, diminished after 1848, as travelers began using other trails such as the California Trail and routes through Arizona. While later wagon roads, and eventually highways, often replicated segments of the Old Spanish Trail, other sections received limited, often local use after about 1850. The establishment of the Intercontinental Railroad in 1869 and other rail routes also resulted in the gradual displacement of many old trails as immigration and commercial routes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ROUTES

Introduction

Travelers' accounts helped identify major and variant routes (see Appendix C: Maps) of the Old Spanish Trail by describing geographical features, cultural sites, and peoples along the trail. While many of these travelers were using the entire trail or parts of the trail after the possible period of significance identified in this document, there is evidence that they were on the same trail used during the period of significance. Based on differing translations of Mexican and Spanish documents and their knowledge of landmarks, geography and geology, and Indian tribes, researchers have mapped Old Spanish Trail routes between New Mexico and California (see "Documentation" section). It is clear from travelers' accounts that the route(s) were dictated by several factors, including: water sources, forage, ease of travel (terrain and climate), presence of friendly tribes (often for trading purposes), and absence of hostile groups (for safety of the caravans). For the purposes of this study, the following descriptions

generally follow the trail routes defined by Crampton and Madsen (1994), Sánchez (1997), Walker (1986), Warren (1974), Steiner (1999), and Kessler (1995). References to the maps in Appendix C are provided in the following descriptions.

Over time, travelers sought easier, shorter routes, and numerous variant trails developed along the Old Spanish Trail Northern Route corridor. Parts of the Northern Route were originally used by the Domínguez-Escalante expedition of 1776, and later traveled by Wolfskill - Yount (1830-31); Orville Pratt (1848); Gunnison (1853); Huntington (1855); Cheesman (1850); and Macomb (1859) (maps 1 and 3).

Travelers who used the North Branch routes through Colorado's San Luis Valley include: Gunnison and Schiel (1853); Heap and Beale (1853); Ruxton (1847); Pope, Slover, and John Wolfskill (1837); and Frémont (1853-1854) (maps 1 and 2). Gunnison, Frémont, and Heap and Beale are also known to have traversed the Gunnison River country on the North Branch (maps 2 and 4).

Travelers who went through Abiquiú before continuing northwest into what is now Colorado include Orville Pratt (1848) and Macomb (1859) (maps 1-3). Their trails overlapped or paralleled parts of the earlier Domínguez-Escalante Route. From the Green River in Utah, Loring (1858), Huntington (1855), and Gunnison (1853) traveled through the Sevier River Valley (map 6).

The Fishlake Cutoff was a shortcut route between Ivie Creek and Junction, Utah. This route was popularized by Brewerton and Carson. Carvalho (1854) intersected the Fishlake Cutoff after leaving the Northern Route east of the Green River (map 6). Jefferson Hunt (1849) and Parley Pratt (1851) joined the routes taken by Frémont (1844) and later by Wheeler (1866), on the recombined Northern Route as it ran southward from Utah into present-day Arizona (maps 5 and 6). Apparently, almost all the travelers used the California Crossing of the Muddy River just inside the Nevada border (map 8). From there, the Armijo Route ran due south, then turned west to intersect or parallel variants of the Northern Route(s) used by Wheeler (1873), A. Pratt (1849), Chandless (1856), and Dalton (1857) (map 8). All the routes converged in the Yermo/Daggett area, just outside Barstow, and continued along the Mojave River and over Cajon Pass into the San Bernardino/Los Angeles area (map 9).

New Mexico

Between Santa Fe and Abiquiú, the Northern Route and Southern Route either overlapped or paralleled each other (map 1). From Abiquiú, the Armijo Route paralleled present-day New Mexico State Highways 96, 595, 173, and 574 northwest to the vicinity of Aztec Ruins National Monument, and entered Colorado just inside the eastern edge of the Ute Mountain Indian Reservation (map 2). The trail re-entered New Mexico briefly just west of U.S. Highway 666, and then continued west into Arizona at the Four Corners area. Originating in Santa Fe, several variants of this main route ran along the Río Grande valley. Near Española and San Juan Pueblo, respectively, two variations of the East Fork of the North Branch broke away from the main trail to run northeast. Several cross trails connected these two variants, which converged just south of Taos. The East Fork continued north along the east side of Colorado's San Luis Valley.

The West Fork of the North Branch ran almost north along Black Mesa through the Carson National Forest and Tres Piedras, to reach the west side of the San Luis Valley (map 1).

The Northern Route continued northwest from Abiquiú parallel with present-day U.S. Highway 84 for several miles before turning northwest to Dulce, New Mexico, and entered Colorado near the town of Caracas.

Colorado

The Armijo Route entered Colorado near the Montezuma County/La Plata County line through a series of arroyos (map 3). Once up out of the arroyos, the route ran westward across a level plateau area paralleling Grass Canyon. At the confluence of Ute, Grass, and Mancos canyons, where there are a number of springs, the route dropped down into the Mancos River drainage, following it west and southwest. Near the east end of Mancos Canyon and a few miles beyond the Mancos River Trading Post (on the Ute Mountain Indian Reservation), the route veered south to re-enter what is now the State of New Mexico (map 3).

The Northern Route entered Colorado along stream drainages, followed Carracas Canyon, crossed the San Juan River, and turned northwest along the river (map 2). The route followed the Mancos and Dolores river drainages northwest past the present-day communities of Mancos, Dolores, Cahone, and Northdale, before exiting the state along the route of U.S. Highway 666.

From New Mexico, the West Fork of the North Branch of the Old Spanish Trail entered Colorado's San Luis Valley along the Río San Antonio (map 2). The East Fork traveled along the west edge of the Sangre de Cristo Range east of the Río Grande (map 1). The routes converged near the town of Saguache, continued northwest over North Cochetopa Pass, and followed Tomichi Creek into the Gunnison River drainage. The route followed the Gunnison River Basin west to present-day Montrose. From Montrose, the North Branch generally followed the Uncompaghe River, fording the river near Delta. Then the trail followed what is now U.S. Highway 50 northwest through Grand Junction to the Utah border.

Utah

The Armijo Route entered Utah in an area that is now part of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and crossed the Colorado River at the Crossing of the Fathers (map 5). Following drainages west for some distance, travelers re-entered Arizona along Kanab Creek. The route briefly reentered the southwestern corner of the state, then followed the Virgin River southwest into Arizona.

Entering what is now Utah, the Northern Route proceeded northwest to the vicinity of Spanish Valley and Moab, where it crossed the Colorado River. The North Branch entered Utah through Grand Valley, and rejoined the main trail at Green River. Fording the Green River at the town of the same name, the Northern Route traversed the San Rafael Swell and entered Castle Valley. The route then ascended Wasatch Pass. Directly on the west side of the pass, a variant known as the Fish Lake Cut-off split off south to rejoin the main branch near Circleville, Utah (map 6).

The Northern Route turned slightly south in order to avoid the Sawtooth Narrows of Salina Canyon and went on the Sevier River. It then followed the Sevier south and southwest to Bear Valley Junction and turned west across the northern end of the Markagunt Plateau into Parowan Valley (map 6). The route passed north of the Antelope Range and turned south to cross Arizona in Beaver Dam Wash (map 5).

Arizona

The Armijo Route entered present-day Arizona in the Four Corners area, skirted the north side of the Carrizo Mountains, and headed west across Chinle Wash and up Laguna Creek to Marsh Pass (maps 3 and 5). From there, it turned northwest through Navajo National Monument, crossing the state line into Utah before fording the Colorado River at the Crossing of the Fathers, above present-day Glen Canyon Dam. It reentered Arizona near Fredonia, skirted south of the Shinarump and Vermilion Cliffs, and

turned back into Utah near Colorado City. It then passed through the northwestern corner of Arizona, following the Virgin River (map 5).

The Mormon Road and the Northern Route and Armijo Route converged in the far northwest corner of Arizona near present-day Littlefield, and followed the Virgin River southwest into Nevada (map 5).

Nevada

The combined Northern Route and Armijo Route followed the Virgin River a short distance into Nevada before dividing (maps 5 and 8). The Armijo Route continued to follow the Virgin River to the Colorado River, and then turned west to skirt Las Vegas on the south (map 8). The trail ran through the Ivanpah Valley, and near Goodsprings, crossed the Spring Mountains before entering present-day California (map 8).

The combined Northern Route and Mormon Road followed the Virgin River and Dry Lake valleys southwest to Las Vegas (Big Springs) and Blue Diamond (Cottonwood) Spring (see Figure 3), crossing the Spring Mountains at Mountain Springs. The trail entered California by way of the Pahrump Valley (map 8).

The Kingston Cutoff left the Northern Route on the west side of the Spring Mountains, and continued south into California (map 8).

From Las Vegas, the Mojave Road variant turned south along modern U.S. Highway 95 to the area of Needles, California, where it joined an ancient trail to Los Angeles (map 8, and description of the Mojave Road, below).

California

The Armijo Route merged with the Northern Route in the Pahrump Valley, and diverged again at Silurian Lake. Going due south from the dry lake, the Armijo Route encountered the Mojave River and followed it south and west to the Yermo/Daggett area (maps 8 and 9).

In the Piute Valley, northwest of Needles, California, the Mojave Road intersected indigenous routes from the Mojave Indian villages on the Colorado River. From here, a short detour southeast could take the traveler to the Colorado River for ample water and pasture, as well as trade opportunities. From the Piute Valley, the Mojave Road turned west across the desert, following an ancient trail by way of several springs, including Piute, Rock, and Marl. The route then went southwest through the Kelso Mountains via Jackass Canyon, and met the Armijo Route near Soda Lake. This combined trail followed existing Indian trails south and west along the Mojave River from its sink, through Afton Canyon and past Camp and Cady springs, to rejoin the other routes at Yermo-Daggett (maps 8 and 9).

Originally, the Mojave River Route was a natural travel corridor through the desert. The river disappears below the surface of its sand channel and flows underground for a great deal of its length, periodically forming large pools of water or scantily running streams that were vital to travelers (Walker 1985:ix).

Just inside the California/Nevada state line, travelers took either the main Kingston Cutoff south and west through Kingston Wash, or went due west over Tecopa Pass in the Kingston Range. The Kingston Cutoff intersected the Northern Route south of Salt Spring, near Silurian Lake (maps 8 and 9).

The Northern Route ran west-southwest across the Pahrump ("big spring") and California valleys and over the short, steep incline at Immigrant Pass to Resting Spring. Then the route turned south at

present-day Tecopa on the Amargosa River, and went through Amargosa Canyon and around the west side of the Dumont Sand Dunes (maps 8 and 9)..

The trail followed what is today California State Highway 127 south through the Silurian Valley. North of Silver Lake, the Northern Route headed due southwest past Red Pass Lake (Mud Lake), over Red Pass, and down to Bitter Spring within present-day Fort Irwin. The main trail continued southwest through Spanish Canyon (see photo on cover). An alternate route ran due south around the east side of Alvord Mountain and rejoined the main trail in the vicinity of Manix Lake. Near present-day Yermo/Daggett at an area known as “Fork of Roads,” the Mojave Road, the Northern Route, the Armijo Route, and the Mormon Road all converged to follow the Mojave River upstream, southwest toward Cajon Pass (maps 8 and 9).

Near Oro Grande, the main route crossed the river at the “Upper Crossing,” or “Lane’s Crossing,” and ran southwest toward Cajon Summit. A maze of different routes, including the Crowder Canyon route and Cajon Canyon route, crossed Cajon Pass. The trail descended Cajon Canyon to Sycamore Grove, then ran west-southwest to present-day Cucamonga, El Monte, San Gabriel, and finally Los Angeles (map 9).